

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 28, 2022

The Honorable Lucille Royball-Allard
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee,
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
2006 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee,
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
2006 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairwoman Royball-Allard and Ranking Member Fleischmann:

We are writing to support a programmatic request of \$7 million to establish a common operating platform (COP) for maritime domain awareness within the Department of Homeland Security.

Recently, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), in coordination with the Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection have been piloting a common operating platform (COP) with great success. For example, enforcing the Jones Act has been difficult for Customs and Border Protection due to limited personnel and resources. International companies and others attempt to skirt this law for financial gain at the expense of our national security and domestic jobs. While the brave men and women of DHS continue to enforce the law to the best of their ability, gaps unfortunately occur.

As a result, the agency has turned to its partners within DHS to identify and pilot software applications that would allow efficient use of its limited resources. Most recently, as a result of the use of a maritime AI tool, the Jones Act Division of Enforcement in New Orleans was able to initiate more than \$2 billion in penalties in 2021. All of the fines collected since the passage of the Merchant Marine Act of 1920 (Jones Act) do not equal to the amount penalized in the last 18 months.

In addition, through the use of this technology, HSI's investigative and enforcement operations have led to the collection of approximately \$450 million in forfeitures related to sanctions violations as well as seizures of precursor chemicals associated with fentanyl production, illegal drugs, and more. Given the significant return on investment that has resulted from the use of this technology, it should be utilized for an enterprise-wide solution for maritime domain awareness across DHS.

Therefore, we are seeking support for \$7 million within HSI to establish a COP for DHS and request the following language:

Common Operating Platform (COP) for Maritime Domain Awareness.—The recommendation provides \$7,000,000 above the request to expand current technology that supports a COP for maritime domain awareness. This platform shall serve as the

basis for ICE, Coast Guard, and CBP to share intelligence and operations information in the maritime environment.

Sincerely,



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



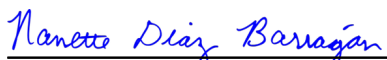
Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress



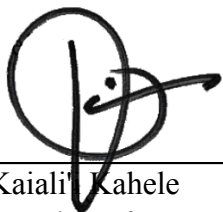
Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Jenniffer González-Colón
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Kaiali'i Kahele
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Elaine G. Luria
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Andrew R. Garbarino
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Peter Meijer
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Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress

Mariannette J. Miller Meeks

Mariannette Miller-Meeks,

M.D.

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